

Public Town Hall on Government Reform and Restructuring Virginia Beach, Virginia

Sandler Performing Arts Center
July 19 2010-6:30-8:00 PM

Opening:

Mayor Fraim introduced the commission and its mission and spoke about some of its activities so far. Commission members Ms. Liddy-Bourne, Secretary Hicks-Thomas, Ms. Suzy Kelly and Mr. Geoff Segal then introduced themselves. Ms. Rosemary Wilson of the Virginia Beach City Council then gave a brief welcome to the commission and recognized some local elected officials in attendance. Mr. Andrew Lamar then said those who did not speak to the commission at the meeting could still submit reform ideas on the commission's website at reform.virginia.gov. Mayor Fraim then opened the floor to the public.

Comments:

- Mr. Robert Dean said the state should: eliminate the business professional occupation license tax, eliminate the machinery and tool tax, remove part B of the enabling requirements on assessments, limit assessments to population growth plus the inflation rate, see that any legislation requested by a city, town or county be applicable statewide, create a constitutional amendment to create a transportation fund lockbox, look at recommendations from the past Wilder Commission, see that all reform ideas are voted on as one block item, require public meetings before district planning commissions or metropolitan planning organizations can vote on major projects, require the same percent of state employees to telecommute with the same percentage amount of population growth and privatize state owned visitor centers and rest stops.
- Mr. Michael Barrett said the state was failing its transportation obligations, employee benefits should be changed from defined benefits to defined contributions, efforts need to be made to retain carriers in Virginia ports, and the state needs to cut back on unfunded mandates on localities.
- Ms. Barbara Carraway suggested having local treasurers help with the collection of delinquent state taxes.
- Mr. Al Wallace said cities in close proximity to each other should consolidate their social services, the carrier should be retained in Hampton Roads, a survey should be conducted of possible natural gas resources off the coast, and transportation planning organizations and metropolitan planning organizations need to be strengthened.
- Mr. Ellis W. James said that citizens' boards in the commonwealth should not be eliminated and the commission needed to make sure it had avenues to get suggestions from those without internet access.
- Mr. John Moss said the state employee pension plan needed to be reformed, state parks should charge visitors more, all state board and commission meetings should be streamed online and assessments should be done on locality spending.
- Mr. Tom Scott-Sharoni said marijuana should be legalized in the commonwealth which would help to alleviate the strain on the correctional system and generate revenue via taxes for the commonwealth.
- Mr. Billy Sergeant stated that the state and localities should change their zoning regulations to amend the set back dimensions for buildings next to roads in order to make more efficient and lower the cost of right of way taking for state and local transportation projects.
- Mr. Dylan DelliSanti said Virginia should legalize the sale and use of marijuana.

- Mr. Waverly Woods said Virginia should privatize its ABC stores and that unemployment benefit costs to employers should be lessened to encourage businesses to hire more.
- Mr. Michael Zingraff said Virginia should not privatize its ABC stores as they are self funded from their operations and provide an important source of revenue for some state agencies.
- Mr. Phillip Kellam said that local commissioners of the revenue and treasurers should not be consolidated as they both perform important and distinct functions and that constitutional officers should be utilized to help provide solutions to state problems.
- Mr. Glen Davis suggested relaxing the Dillon Rule in Virginia to give localities more authority to address local issues, reducing unfunded mandates on localities and encouraging regional sharing of government services.
- Mr. Bob Dyer said local governments should also have commissions on government reform just as the state does.
- Ms. Krista O'Connell said Virginia should legalize the sale and use of marijuana and encourage and help fund alternative energy sources.
- Ms. Claire Pickard said Virginia should invest more in charter schools across the state.
- Mr. Jason Scadder outlined Wal-Mart stores safety procedures for selling alcohol to demonstrate Wal-Mart could safely sell liquor in Virginia and said the WIC program in Virginia needed to be reformed due to inefficiency.
- A commenter suggested providing bus assistants to all public school bus drivers in Virginia, providing more security staff in public schools and condensing walking zones around schools to allow more children to take buses to school.

Closing:

Mr. Lamar thanked the Sandler Center for hosting the town hall meeting and reminded everyone present that the next meeting of the full commission would be held on July 20th in Richmond. The Commission members then in turn thanked the town hall attendees. Mayor Fraim then adjourned the meeting at 7:50 PM.